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IDENTIFICATION OF PORTRAIT FEATURES OF SHAH ISMAIL I ACCORDING TO THE 16TH CENTURY EUROPEAN SOURCES

Abstract. Although several portraits of Shah Ismail I – the founder of Safavid State of Azerbaijan are known today, there is no detailed research works on the true author of these portraits, when and under what circumstances they were painted. For the first time, the identification of the portraits was classified according to two different criteria: the first for outward signs (clothes, ornamental accessories, hat, etc.) and the second for anthropometric signs. The image of Shah Ismail I was analysed comparatively with the portraits of Yavuz Sultan Selim, their different peculiarities were revealed.

Key words: Safavid state, Shah Ismail I, portrait, comparative analysis, identification.

Introduction. The Qizilbashs were heard not only in the region, but in the whole world, especially in Europe from the first years of the 16th century. The Qizilbashs entered Tabriz under the leadership of Shah Ismail I in autumn of 1501 and Ismail declared himself shah (king). In a short time, his fame spread all over the world and travelers, diplomats and merchants from various places traveled to Azerbaijan and Iran. Various rumors and legends were told about Ismail I. it should be noted that Ismail I was known as “Sufi”, “Sophie” and “Sheikh” in Europe. News about Ismail Sufi began to be heard in the West after he declared himself shah. Professor of Notre-Damme University Margaret Meserv wrote in detail about news about Ismail I spread in Renaissance Europe in her article “Sofi. News about Shah Ismail in Renaissance Europe”. Some news was that Ismail adopted Christianity or he was the creator of a new religion, which was completely contradictory to Islam or he was savior and even a prophet for all Christian nations. It is narrated that Ismail’s supporters

were too devoted to him, they could give their lives as a sacrifice for him. Zuan Moresini, who wrote letter from Damascus in 1508, presented Sufi as the ideal prince of the Renaissance: “His face was clean-shaven, he had great writing skills and he was hard working, a great just, completely devoid of greediness, and even more generous, nicer than Alexander.” [1, 2].

Our systematic researches, which have being carried out since 2003, show that today there are a number of portraits of Shah Ismail – the founder of the Safavid State of Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, there is no detailed research work on the true author of these portraits, when and under what circumstances they were painted. First of all, the solution of this problem may be possible due to the scientifically based identification of the features of the portraits of Shah Ismail I.

The identification of the portrait painted in the 16th century involves the determination of accordance degree of specific features in the portrait with information on the person portrayed in the portrait in historical sources. There are two points here:

Firstly, additional outward signs, they are mainly clothes, jewelry, ornaments, hat, various accessories, etc.

Secondly, anatomical signs, they are person's gender, anthropological peculiarities, body's structure, age, hair color, nose, eyes and ear shape, etc.

This anthropometric identification system that we introduce was created by a French lawyer Alfonse Bertillon in the late 19th and early 20th centuries [3], later was improved by R.-A.Reiss [4].

The research task of historical sources, documents, miniature paintings, etc. about the abovementioned directions, i.e. anthropometric and outwards signs has become essential in connection with Shah Ismail's personality.

Information about Shah Ismail's outward features

The Qizilbashs' movement spread widely in Azerbaijan with Shah Ismail's coming to power. There are different views about this sect in historical sources. For some assumptions, Hazrat Ali participated in wars with a red crown on his head. For this reason, the Qizilbashs used these clothes [5]. According another assumption, Shah Ismail signed a treaty with Bayezid II and transferred his warriors from Anatolia to Syria. These warriors wore red wrapper made of fine material. According to S.Naghiyev, the Qizilbashs were called because they tied 12 red stripes wrapper in honor of 12 Shi'a imams [6].

Art critics from the countries of Central Asia also support this idea [7, 8]. A researcher of the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of Tajikistan Academy of Sciences Mubina Mahmudova wrote in her article “Color shades of the Tajiks’ traditional clothes according to medieval written sources”:

“The Safavids and their warriors wore red hood to be distinguished religiously and militarily and called themselves Gizilbashes. Such headwear was worn to signify the differences of the religious confessions of the Safavids and those who wore this headwear envied Ali – the first of the twelve imams and the fourth caliph. Therefore, this headwear was 12 slices in honor of the 12 imams” [9].

In our opinion, the leader of the Qizilbashes Shah Ismail I couldn’t avoid these clothes as a notable person. Shah Ismail Khatai’s ghazals confirmed the abovementioned opinions about the Qizilbashes’ headwear.[10].

The identification of a portrait preserved in Topkapi Palace Museum in Istanbul and known as “Sultan Selim” waits also its solution. There are several portraits of Sultan Selim in museums around the world. The portrait in the Topkapi Museum resembles Shah Ismail for some features. There are several peculiarities in the portrait that are not typical for Turkish sultans:

- The first thing is that the person in the portrait wears only one earring (mengush) in his ear.
- The second thing is the red crown (turban) on the person’s head.
- Third thing is a pearl amulet on the person’s neck.

According to historians, Sultan Selim I “was a ruler who did not love jewelry” and it is inconceivable for him to wear such an amulet.

The character in the portrait differs from the face in the portrait of Sultan Selim I that is preserved in the Reinhard Huasen castle in Germany.

There is a high probability that the portrait named as Sultan Selim in the Topkapi Palace belongs to Shah Ismail I. It is pretended that this portrait was painted by an unknown Hungarian artist long after Sultan Selim’s death. The person in the portrait was described with moustache, red headwear and earring in his one ear. There is no information on earrings in the book “Selimname” about Sultan Selim’s life [11-15]. Turkish researcher Erhan Afyonju wrote in the monograph “Yavuz’s earring” that the portrait resembles more Shah Ismail than Sultan Selim. It should be emphasized that many Turkish Internet resources express strong opinion that the portrait doesn’t belong to Sultan

Selim. The red headwear and 12 slices crown that were described in the portrait increase the probability that the portrait belongs to Shah Ismail. The red crown (turban) in the portrait was stylized in miniatures of the 17th century artist MuinMusavvir and it is considered as same as the Qizilbash's crowns. It should be noted again that the character in the portrait was described with mangush (earring). E.Afyonchu pretends that this peculiarity was characteristic of the Qizilbashes [16]. There are numerous characters with mangush in miniatures concerning the Safavid period. A number of the Safavid clothes were represented in the book "Antique and modern clothes in the different places of the world" of Venetian artist Cesare Vecellio. "Iranian Shah's clothes" was described on the page 460 of the book, which was published in Paris in 1860 and in two languages. Undoubtedly, the Shah of Iran means the Safavid Shah. It couldn't be otherwise in the 16th century. Shah's clothes are accompanied by the following annotation:

"The Shah of Iran is wearing a turban made of silk. We see a gold crown ornamented with beautiful, precious stones at the top part of the turban" [17].

These ideas also confirm some kind our ideas about the portrait preserved in the Topkapi Palace. There are several variants of this portrait in graphic style. Most likely, all these portraits were copied from one sample.

Information on anthropometric peculiarities of Shah Ismail

A research work "Shah Ismail I's life and personality – 1487-1524" was carried out in Edinburg University in 1981 [18]. This work, which is a dissertation for a Doctor of Philosophy by a researcher Muhammad Karim Yusif, is sufficiently wide and comprehensive research work. The 3rd chapter of the dissertation is titled "The appearance, personal habits and intellectual life of Shah Ismail". It is noted in this chapter that Italian traveler Giovanni Maria Angiolello lived in Shah Ismail's palace for a while. The traveler's memories about Shah Ismail's appearance were used as true information in M.K. Yusif's dissertation:

"This Safavid ruler was a fair, handsome and nice person, who was not too tall, with full body, wide shoulders, red hair, moustache, used his left hand more (left-handed). He was more courageous than his warriors" [18].

It was noted that Shah Ismail was white-faced with red hair, shaved face only with long moustache in other works. We have investigated the information on Shah Ismail Khatai's appearance in his ghazals and come to

some conclusion. It is interesting that there is a couplet among Shah Ismail Khatai's ghazals which praise often shaving his face and it confirms our view about his appearance [19]:

Gəl tərəş et xəttini, şahi-cahan üç gündə bir,
Ta olasanafəti-dövri-zamanüçgündəbir.

Literal translation:

*Let's shave, the king of the world, once every three days,
To become the most handsome of the world once every three days.*

It should be also noted that Shah Ismail was described with clear shaved face, but with long moustache in majority of the Safavid miniatures.

If we pay attention to the Qizilbashs' turbans in miniatures painted by palace artists during Shah Ismail's reign, it is supposed that the turban was described incompletely in the portrait preserved in the Uffizi Gallery.

The portrait of Shah Ismail I in Uffizi Gallery was mentioned as Bellinis in the Azerbaijan Soviet Encyclopedia [20]. It was noted in the encyclopedia that this portrait was painted by Bellinis. During our research at the Uffizi Gallery and Library we determined that this portrait was painted by Cristofano dell'Altissimo during 1552-68, i.e. after Shah Ismail I's death. The height of the portrait is 60 cm, the width is 45 cm, which was painted with oil paint on the wood. We consider that the portrait was painted with the technique characteristic of Florence school of painting. The author of the work Cristofano dell'Altissimo was an artist of Florence school of painting. Cristofano dell'Altissimo was born in Florence in 1520, he was a student of Pontormo, but later of Bronzino. The influence of Bronzino is felt clearly in Cristofano's works. He copied portraits preserved in Paolo Giovio's collection in Como by Cosimo de' Medici's order for a long time since 1552. This portrait collection is called "Giovio series" and preserved in Uffizi Gallery at present. Another interesting fact is that when Cristofano copied some portraits, he made some changes in the solution of portrait composition, somehow he assimilated the work, painted it in his own way. But we analyse the existing painting in any case.

Paola Giovio was a brilliant intellectual, humanist scientist, doctor and collector of his time. Paola Giovio, who was an author of many works, was also known as an author of biographical books reflected the lives of famous people of his time. His most interesting work is "*Elogia virorum bellica virtute illustrium*" (The names of notable military forces – EA) for us. The book was

published in 1554 and later it was published many times. In our opinion, Paolo Giovio used notes of many travelers, including Maria Angiollello to write this book and it is possible that both portraits of the Safavid ruler were painted on the basis of these notes. Sufi was known as a sheikh, a savior and even a prophet in Europe. It is rumoured that he was very strong, humanistic and fair. That is why rumor about Sufi's adoption Christianity spread, he was expected to be a savior for Christians and Europeans. It is possible that Shah's face was described spiritual, nice and bright in the portrait by Cristofano because of abovementioned reasons. Paolo Giovio also talked about Ismail I with great respect in his work:

"Ismail Safavi, Sufi, who is brilliant person with bright face, is the only person whose reputation and fame have reached every corner of the world as I remember" [21].

Conclusion. As we get acquainted with the 16th century European sources, we see a great interest in Ismail I. Nearly all the European powers longed for following Shah Ismail's life and activities. From this view point, the 16th century European travelers, diplomats and merchants' safarnames (travelogue) give us some information about Ismail's appearance and his way of life. Investigation of these sources will help us in finding the original of Ismail I's portraits, their identifications, answers to questions about the authors and under what conditions these portrait were painted.

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Elşad Əliyev (Azərbaycan)

**XVI əsr Avropa mənbələrinə əsasən I Şah İsmayılın
portret cizgilərinin identifikasiyası**

Azərbaycan Səfəvilər dövlətinin qurucusu I Şah İsmayılın günümüzdə qədər gəlib çıxmış bir neçə portreti məlum olsa da, bunların əsl müəllifi, nə vaxt və hansı şəraitdə çəkildiyi haqqında ətraflı tədqiqat işi mövcud deyil. Müxtəlif mənbələrdə I İsmayılın xarici görünüşü ilə bağlı bir çox məlumata rast gəlirik. Apardığımız tədqiqatlar multidissiplinar xarakter daşıyır və əsas məqsədi I Şah İsmayılın mövcud portretlərinin sənətsünaslıq baxımından identifikasiya edilməsidir. Portretlərin identifikasiyası üçün ilk dəfə olaraq iki fərqli kriteriyaya görə təsnifat aparılmışdır: birincisi xarici əlamətlərə (geyim, bəzək aksesuarları, papaq və s.) görə və ikincisi antropometrik əlamətlər. I Şah İsmayıl obrazı Yavuz Sultan Səlimin portretləri ilə komparativ təhlil edilmiş, onların fərqli xüsusiyyətləri aşkara çıxarılmışdır.

Açar sözlər: Səfəvilər dövləti, I Şah İsmayıl, portret, komparativ təhlil, identifikasiya.

Эльшад Алиев (Азербайджан)

**Идентификация портретных черт Шаха Исмаила Первого
на основе европейских источников XVI века**

Хотя до сих пор было обнаружено несколько портретов основателя Государство Сефевидов Шах Исмаила. К сожалению нет подробных исследований этих портретов и их истинного автора. Существует несколько источников где мы можем найти информации о внешнем виде Исмаила. Наши исследования являются междисциплинарными, и основной целью является выявление существующих портретов Шаха Исмаила Первого с точки зрения искусства. Впервые портреты были классифицированы по двум различным критериям: первый – для внешних знаков (одежда, декоративные аксессуары, шляпа и т. д.), второй – для антропометрических знаков. Образ Шах Исмаила был всесторонне проанализирован с помощью портретов Явуза Султана Селима, и были выявлены их отличительные черты.

Ключевые слова: Государство Сефевидов, Шах Исмаил I, портрет, сравнительный анализ, идентификация.